

96TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2468

To provide for the installation of telecommunications devices for the deaf in agencies of Federal, State, and local governments, in offices of Members of Congress, and in other locations.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 27, 1979

Mrs. SPELLMAN introduced the following bill; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Government Operations and House Administration

A BILL

To provide for the installation of telecommunications devices for the deaf in agencies of Federal, State, and local governments, in offices of Members of Congress, and in other locations.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That this Act may be cited as the "Deaf Services Act".

FINDINGS

5 SEC. 2. The Congress finds that—

6 (1) it is of critical importance to this Nation that
7 equality of opportunity, equal access to all aspects of

1 society, and equal rights guaranteed by the Constitu-
2 tion be provided to all individuals with handicaps;

3 (2) equal access to government is essential to
4 insure that all individuals are protected in their first
5 amendment right to petition the government for a re-
6 dress of grievances, and to insure that all individuals
7 are able to obtain information needed by them to deal
8 with increasingly complex government regulations;

9 (3) instantaneous communication with government
10 agencies by the use of telephone is available to a large
11 majority of citizens, but is not available to deaf persons
12 who must resort to more expensive and time-consum-
13 ing procedures to deal with government;

14 (4) there currently exists at a reasonable cost the
15 technology to transmit printed information instant-
16 neously by use of an electronic device coupled to a
17 standard telephone, and the widespread adoption of
18 this technology by agencies would better enable deaf
19 persons to communicate with all levels of government
20 on an equal basis; and

21 (5) it is, therefore, the policy of Congress that this
22 technology be adopted in as many agencies and offices
23 of Federal, State, and local governments as possible to
24 provide deaf persons with greater access to
25 government.

1 have the greatest need for communication, including, but not
2 limited to, the Department of Health, Education, and Wel-
3 fare, the Department of Labor, and the Internal Revenue
4 Service, and shall have installed in each such agency and its
5 regional offices a telecommunications device for the deaf.
6 Such telecommunications devices shall be used primarily to
7 receive calls from deaf persons seeking information from such
8 agencies, but shall also be available for the use of deaf per-
9 sons in communicating with any of the other agencies and
10 offices in which telecommunications devices are installed
11 under this Act.

12 (b) The selection of agencies under this section shall be
13 made by the Secretary after consultation with the Deafness
14 and Communicative Disorders Office of the Department of
15 Health, Education, and Welfare; the National Center for
16 Law and the Deaf; the National Association of the Deaf; and
17 other appropriate organizations and individuals with special
18 knowledge of the problems of deaf persons.

19 SEC. 102. (a) The Secretary shall select not less than
20 one hundred locations, other than those selected under sec-
21 tion 101, and shall install in each a telecommunications
22 device for the deaf which shall be available to deaf people for
23 their use in communicating with the agencies selected under
24 section 101, with State agencies selected under title II, and

1 with Members of Congress who choose to install such a tele-
2 communications device under title III.

3 (b) The selection of locations under this section shall be
4 made with the objective of providing access to telecommuni-
5 cations devices to as many deaf persons as possible. In ac-
6 cordance with this objective, the Secretary shall identify and
7 give priority to areas where relatively large numbers of deaf
8 persons reside, and shall avoid selecting locations so close to
9 each other or to an agency selected under section 101 as to
10 cause an unnecessary duplication of service. The Secretary
11 shall select at least one location in each State.

12 SEC. 103. (a) The Secretary shall make the selections of
13 agencies and locations required by this title, and shall begin
14 installation of the telecommunications devices for the deaf not
15 later than one year after the date of enactment of this Act.

16 (b) The Secretary shall complete the installation of the
17 telecommunications devices required by this Act not later
18 than two years after the date of enactment of this Act.

19 SEC. 104. (a) The Secretary shall make all reasonable
20 efforts to inform deaf persons of the availability of the tele-
21 communications devices installed under this Act. The Secre-
22 tary shall disseminate information as widely as possible to
23 local organizations and associations of the deaf which shall—

24 (1) state the purpose of such telecommunications
25 devices;

1 (2) state the cost of such telecommunications de-
2 vices to the user; and

3 (3) list all the agencies, offices of Members of
4 Congress, and other locations in which such telecom-
5 munications devices have been installed under this Act.

6 (b)(1) The Secretary shall issue easily understandable
7 instructions for the use of telecommunications devices for the
8 deaf to each agency, office, or location in which they are
9 installed under this title.

10 (2) The Secretary shall require by regulation that at
11 least one employee at each location at which telecommunica-
12 tions devices are installed under section 102 be able and
13 available to assist deaf persons in the use of such devices
14 during normal working hours.

15 SEC. 105. Each agency, office, or location in which a
16 telecommunications device is installed under this title shall
17 keep such records as may be required by the Secretary by
18 regulation for purposes of the report prepared under section
19 401 of this Act.

20 SEC. 106. There are authorized to be appropriated such
21 sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this
22 title.

23 TITLE II—GRANTS TO STATES

24 SEC. 201. The Secretary shall make a grant to any
25 State or local government meeting the requirements of this

1 title for the purpose of installing telecommunications devices
2 for the deaf in its agencies and in other locations for the use
3 of deaf persons in communicating with all levels of govern-
4 ment.

5 SEC. 202. (a) Any State or local government seeking a
6 grant under this title shall make an application to the Secre-
7 tary, in accordance with such terms and conditions as the
8 Secretary may prescribe.

9 (b) Such application shall state the agencies of govern-
10 ment and the other locations in which the State or local gov-
11 ernment proposes to install the telecommunications devices
12 for the deaf.

13 (c) Such application shall make assurances that such
14 State or local government—

15 (1) will provide 25 per centum of the funds re-
16 quired to install and operate such telecommunications
17 devices;

18 (2) will install only telecommunications devices
19 meeting quality standards set by the Secretary and
20 prescribed by regulation;

21 (3) will make all reasonable efforts to inform deaf
22 persons of the availability of such telecommunications
23 devices including the dissemination of information
24 which states the purpose of such telecommunications
25 devices and the cost to the user, and lists all the agen-

1 cies and locations in which such telecommunications
2 devices are to be installed;

3 (4) will provide that at least one employee at each
4 agency and location at which such telecommunications
5 devices are installed is able and available to assist deaf
6 persons in the use of such devices during normal work-
7 ing hours; and

8 (5) will keep any records required by the Secre-
9 tary for purposes of the report under section 401 of
10 this Act.

11 SEC. 203. Upon approval of the application under sec-
12 tion 202, the Secretary shall make a grant of 75 per centum
13 of the cost of installing and operating the telecommunications
14 devices for the deaf for the first year of operation.

15 SEC. 204. Continuing grants for the operation of the
16 telecommunications devices installed under this title shall be
17 made each year, based upon a renewal application filed by
18 the State or local government, in accordance with such terms
19 and conditions as the Secretary may prescribe, which proves
20 to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the assurances re-
21 quired by section 202 have been met and will continue to be
22 met in the year for which the continuing grant is sought.

23 SEC. 205. The Secretary shall seek the cooperation of
24 the Administrator of General Services in having transferred
25 to States any telecommunications devices for the deaf catego-

1 rized as Federal surplus property, under section 203(j) of the
2 Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949
3 (40 U.S.C. 484(j)). Such surplus shall be transferred, to the
4 extent available, to States that have made application for
5 such telecommunications devices under section 202, and shall
6 be distributed among those States in an equitable manner.

7 SEC. 206. (a) There are authorized to be appropriated
8 such sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of
9 this title.

10 (b) If sums appropriated in any fiscal year are not suffi-
11 cient to carry out the provisions of this title, the Secretary
12 shall ratably reduce the grants made to all State and local
13 governments whose applications are approved. If additional
14 funds are made available for such year they shall be used to
15 ratably increase the amount paid to each such government.

16 TITLE III—INSTALLATION OF TELECOMMUNICA-
17 TIONS DEVICES IN OFFICES OF MEMBERS OF
18 CONGRESS AND IN THE CAPITOL

19 SEC. 301. Any Member of Congress shall be provided
20 with a telecommunications device for the deaf upon a written
21 request to the Committee on House Administration of the
22 House of Representatives or the Committee on Rules and
23 Administration of the Senate.

24 SEC. 302. The Architect of the Capitol shall install at
25 the central switchboard in the United States Capitol a tele-

1 communications device for the deaf, and there shall be at
2 least one employee trained in the use of such device available
3 during normal working hours to provide assistance to deaf
4 persons.

5 SEC. 303. There are authorized to be appropriated such
6 sums as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this
7 title.

8 TITLE IV—REPORT TO CONGRESS

9 SEC. 401. The Secretary shall prepare a report for Con-
10 gress, not later than two years after the installation of the
11 first telecommunications device under this Act, which shall—

12 (1) present the statistics kept at each agency,
13 office, and location on the use of the telecommunica-
14 tions devices;

15 (2) analyze the efficacy of the programs to install
16 telecommunications devices under titles II and III in
17 light of such statistics;

18 (3) make recommendations on the continuation
19 and expansion of such programs; and

20 (4) assess any new developments in the technol-
21 ogy of telecommunications devices for the deaf, and
22 means of adopting such developments in existing and
23 future telecommunications devices for which funding is
24 provided by the Congress.